

# THE HOLY SPIRIT



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# THE HOLY SPIRIT

by

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# THE HOLY SPIRIT

Reason can tell us a great many things about God. But of God's Inner Life, reason can give us very little information. Here we must go to Revelation and learn what God has been pleased to tell us about Himself.

## HOLY TRINITY

Confirming the conclusions of reason that God exists and is a Personal Being of infinite perfection, God has told us in Revelation that in Himself there are three different and distinct Persons—the Person of the Father, the Person of the Son, and the Person of the Holy Spirit. One God in three Persons; three Persons in one and the same God; one Infinite Nature and in the one Infinite Nature three distinct Persons—such is the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.

All of the attributes of God are

shared in common by the three Persons; but because of the feeble grasp which the human mind has of such high things, we assign in a special manner to God the Father, omnipotence and eternity; to God the Son, knowledge and wisdom, since the Son proceeds eternally from the Father by way of understanding; and to God the Holy Spirit, charity and its kindred virtues, since the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son by way of love. With respect to the works of God outside Himself, we speak of God the Father as the Author of creation; God the Son as the Accomplisher of our redemption; and God the Holy Spirit as the Source of our sanctification. God the Father creates us, God the Son redeems us, God the Holy Ghost sanctifies us.

### **HOLY SPIRIT—NAME**

The Holy Spirit is commonly called the Holy Ghost. But the revision of

the Challoner-Rheims version of the New Testament published in 1941 with the approbation of the American Hierarchy uniformly uses the phrase "Holy Spirit" in place of "Holy Ghost."

Christ Himself taught us to call the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity the Holy Spirit. (cf. John 14, 17; 20, 22; Matt. 28, 19.) Each of the three Persons is of course a Spirit. Since the Incarnation, however, the Second Divine Person possesses a human body also. The title of "Spirit" is particularly appropriate to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity because of the manner of His procession, called "Spiration," from the Father and the Son.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD**

The Holy Spirit then is one of the three Persons of the Most Blessed Trinity, different and distinct from the Father and the Son. He is as truly God as God the Father and God

the Son. In His discourse to the disciples after the Last Supper, Christ clearly distinguished between Himself, and the Father, and the Holy Spirit, saying, "I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete that He may abide with you forever" (John 14, 16). Christ Himself is a Paraclete; the other Paraclete is the Holy Spirit. A little later on in the same discourse, Christ proclaims the same truth once more, saying, "But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He will give testimony of Me." Here the three Divine Persons are spoken of clearly; the Father from whom the Spirit proceeds, the Spirit sent by the Father to give testimony of the Son, and the Son of whom testimony was to be given.

### **PROMISE FULFILLED**

What Jesus promised at the Last Supper came to pass on the first Pen-



tecost Day which is often spoken of as "the day of the Holy Spirit." On this day, the mission of the Holy Spirit officially began on earth, fulfilling the promise of Jesus that "He shall abide with you until the end of time."

The Holy Spirit is to teach, sanctify, and rule the Church in an invisible manner until the end of the world. The sanctification of men, which is the chief function of the Church, is the work of the Holy Spirit. "The charity of God," says St. Paul, "is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us" (Rom. 5, 5).

The author of our sanctification is Jesus Christ because He merited Grace for us. The Holy Spirit communicates this Grace to us and thus actually brings about our sanctification. For this reason He is called in the Nicene Creed the "Life-Giver" that is the giver of supernatural life to the soul.

We receive the Divine gift of sanc-

tifying grace from God the Holy Spirit. He is the source and principle of the life of God in the souls of men. The Holy Spirit of God is the spirit of truth and holiness, the spirit of sanctity and of strength. It was this Holy Spirit of God who took possession of those twelve unlearned and untutored men on Pentecost Day, filled their hearts with His own divine wisdom and courage and charity, and enabled them to bring a pagan world to the feet of Christ. It is this same Holy Spirit of God who has sanctified all the saints and inspired every good work of every Christian from the day of Pentecost down to our own. It is this same Holy Spirit who dwelling by grace within us makes us to live with the Life of God, makes us to be other Christs, Christ-men, Christians.

## **DIVINE GRACE—HOW RECEIVED**

In the first instance, Divine Grace is given to us in the Sacrament of

Baptism. "According to His mercy," says St. Paul, "He saved us through the bath of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit, in order that, justified by His Grace, we may be heirs in the hope of life everlasting" (Titus 3, 5). "Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God," said our Lord (John 3, 5). Man begins his natural life in this world by being born according to the laws of nature; he begins his supernatural life in the Church by the spiritual birth of Baptism. By natural birth, he is of the race of Adam; by his spiritual birth, he is born of the race of Christ and made a Christian. All the rest of the Sacraments either increase Sanctifying Grace in the soul or restore it if lost by mortal sin. Prayer, good works, and the holy Sacrifice of the Mass are so many means to preserve and augment this Life of God in the soul of man.

## **DIVINE GRACE— HOW REGAINED**

The supernatural gift of Divine Grace has been merited for us by the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. It is bestowed upon us by God the Holy Spirit, and may be lost by mortal sin. This fact alone gives us some idea of the heinousness and horrible nature of sin. Mortal sin is nothing less than the snuffing out of this Life of God in the soul of man. Venial sin does not wholly destroy this Life of God in the soul, but it does impair and greatly weaken it. The Sacrament of Penance, commonly called Confession, is one of the main means provided by our Lord to counteract the curse of sin and restore to the soul Supernatural Life, once it has been destroyed or diminished by sin.

### **CARDINAL NEWMAN**

Cardinal Newman in his "Meditations and Devotions," has a beautiful

prayer to the Holy Spirit which each of us might well make his own. It runs as follows:

“I adore Thee, O Eternal Paraclete, the light and the life of my soul. Thou mightest have been content with merely giving me good suggestions, inspiring grace and helping from without. Thou mightest thus have led me on, cleansing me with Thy inward virtue, when I changed my state from this world to the next. But in Thine infinite compassion Thou hast from the first entered into my soul, and taken possession of it. Thou hast made it Thy Temple. Thou dwellest in me by Thy grace in an ineffable way, uniting me to Thyself and the whole company of angels and saints. Nay—as though Thou hadst taken possession of my very body, this earthly, fleshly, wretched tabernacle—even my body is Thy Temple. O astonishing, awful truth! I believe it, I know it, O my God!

“O my God, can I sin when Thou

art so intimately with me? God forbid. I will use what Thou hast given me; I will guard against the sloth and carelessness into which I am constantly falling. Through Thee I will never forsake Thee." (p. 554.)

## GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The greatest gift of the Holy Spirit to man is the gift of Himself. "Know you not that you are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1 Cor. 6, 19).

To be in the state of grace implies the substantial indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul. We are the temples of God and the Spirit of God dwells within us. We are in close contact with the Divinity, and in proportion as we bring this fact home, our past sins and present coldness appear to be unbearably wicked. In the more per-

fect realization of this sublime truth lies the invitation and the urge to make our earthly life resemble more perfectly the life of the Blessed in Heaven.

While pseudo-mystics and some of the Protestant sects went astray on this subject in an attempt to substitute an internal religion of the heart for the religious system of the Catholic Church, the indwelling spirit of God in every soul possessing sanctifying grace is an essential element in the body of Catholic truth. That the Christian soul is the temple of God, the Holy Spirit, that the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity really and substantially abides in the soul of every human being clothed with sanctifying grace is an article of Catholic faith.

Some, perhaps many, with ample opportunity and good will for spiritual things fail to give this fact a moment's thought. That is strange indeed. But possibly it is no more strange

than the fact that you will sometimes see people in church devote all their time and thought to "special devotions" giving scarcely the slightest evidence of consciousness that the Blessed Sacrament is present before them in the tabernacle. Perhaps no point of Catholic doctrine needs to be more emphasized today than this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the just.

## SEVEN GIFTS

When the Holy Spirit comes to abide in the soul, He brings with Him His sevenfold gifts of Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear. These seven spiritual gifts are bestowed by God, the Holy Ghost on every Christian at the moment the soul is freed from mortal sin. These gifts play an important part in the spiritual life of every Christian. Four of these gifts affect the intellect, and three the will.



By Wisdom, man tastes the sweetness of heavenly truth; by Understanding, he penetrates its obscurities; by Knowledge, he sees human affairs clearly in their relation to God; by Counsel, he perceives the plan of action which is God's wish that he should follow. Then by Piety, his will is aroused to a filial affection toward God; by Fortitude, he is made ready to suffer all pain and trials as well as to dare all things for God's sake; and by Fear, there is implanted within him reverence for God's majesty, submission to God's Will, and a supreme dread of sin.

The soul is the temple of God. Yet this is a manner of speech that fails in some measure to represent the reality. The soul's relation to God is something more than that of a dwelling place; something more than the marble saint kneeling within the sanctuary. Human life is a time of activity and growth; it is a period of progress

toward perfection. It is a development attained by means of exercise of faculties within the soul itself. Intellect and will are the instruments of progress. It is precisely these faculties that are supernaturalized by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

## **THE SANCTIFIER**

When the Holy Spirit takes possession of a soul, He exercises a divine influence over all the faculties of that soul. He so affects the intellect and will of the soul wherein He resides that by the exercise of these faculties, it will ever tend toward a closer resemblance to and a more intimate union with the Divinity. Hence the Holy Spirit is continually driving away darkness from the mind, inflaming and strengthening the will, and exciting holy thoughts and pious desires. According to St. Thomas, these seven gifts are seven infused habits or dispositions whereby the soul is made

sensitive to receive and alert to follow the illuminations and inspirations of the Holy Spirit. In this they differ from the so-called habits of virtue: by the habits of virtue we are disposed to follow perfectly the guidance of reason, while by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we are disposed to perceive and obey those interior divine inspirations which God "works in us without us." "Among God's gifts to the just," writes Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical Letter on the Holy Spirit, "there are secret warnings and invitations which from time to time are excited in our minds and hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Without them, there is no beginning a good life, no making progress, no obtaining eternal salvation." Who of us has never felt what these words describe? The baptized soul is made holy and led upward by a divine guide.

The seven gifts, however, must be cultivated. Much depends on the care

with which we reject what mars, and cherish what prospers their development. "We may make ourselves fools," says Cardinal Manning, "even while we abide in the state of sanctifying grace. We may do so by the venial sins which we commit every day with such ease and in such numbers. As the fine dust which gathers gradually upon a time-piece slackens its motion and destroys its precision in marking the time, so a multitude of venial sins gradually clouds the conscience and chokes and slackens the action of the seven gifts." (Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost. c. 7.) Looking back through the years, most of us will keenly appreciate what a help the gifts of the Holy Spirit would have been to us had they been properly cultivated.

## **PENTECOST**

Reflection on the Holy Spirit and His seven gifts is always timely, but

never in better season than at Pentecost, the glorious feast that commemorates the birth of the Church and marks the dawn of an intimacy between the soul and its Maker, hitherto unknown in the history of God's dealing with men. "For then did the Holy Spirit begin to pour Himself more abundantly," as St. Leo observes. Many years ago the great theologian Scheeben predicted that the spirit of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus would be followed by the great extension of devotion to the Holy Spirit. It is time now that this prediction should come true. Harrassed human souls across the world need the uplifting and ennobling power of the Holy Spirit to rise above the calamities and catastrophies of this our day. Of course there can be no new Economy in the Christian religion. But there can always be new floods and torrents of Divine Grace poured into the hearts of Christians; there can be new births

in the knowledge and love of the Divine Comforter—the Person who has been to so many an unknown God; there can be a new realization of the breadth and depth of the Almighty's love for the children of men— children of God's special love indeed if in these days they are to witness such an outpouring of grace as will lead them to love the Paraclete.

## **HYMN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,  
And in our souls take up Thy rest,  
Come with Thy grace and heavenly  
aid,  
And fill the hearts which Thou hast  
made.

To Thee, the Comforter, we cry,  
To Thee, the gift of God most high,  
The fount of love, the fire of love,  
The soul's anointing from above.

The sevenfold gifts of grace are Thine,  
O Finger of the hand Divine,  
True promise of the Father Thou,  
Who dost the tongue with speech  
endow.

Thy light to every thought impart,  
And shed Thy love in every heart;  
Our body's poor infirmity  
With strength perpetual fortify.

Our mortal foe afar repel,  
Grant us henceforth in peace to dwell;  
If Thou be our preventing guide,  
No evil can our steps betide.

Make Thou to us the Father known;  
Teach us the Eternal Son to own  
And Thee, Whose name we ever bless,  
Of Both the Spirit to confess.

All glory while the ages run  
Be to the Father and the Son,  
Who rose from death; the same to  
Thee,  
O Holy Ghost, eternally. Amen.

## Let Us Pray

We beseech Thee, O Holy Spirit! descend with Thy light and consolation lovingly into our souls; enlighten our understandings, and consecrate those hearts which Thou hast sanctified as Thy temples. O Holy Ghost, console the afflicted, encourage and strengthen the weak; instruct and support the wavering; rouse the sinners to penance, enkindle in their cold hearts the fire of Divine love, and a filial confidence in Thee, that all men in peace and joy may thankfully praise and adore Thee, together with the Father and the Son, one God, world without end. Amen.

O God, who hast taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that we may, by the gift of the same Spirit, be always truly wise, and ever rejoice in His consolations. Amen.



## **YOU CATHOLICS DO NOT HONOR THE HOLY SPIRIT ENOUGH.**

We Catholics do honor the Holy Spirit. Nowhere in the world does the Holy Spirit of God receive so much honor as in the Catholic Church. He it is who sanctifies the souls of men and peoples Heaven with Saints. The fact that we do not rest our religious life wholly and exclusively upon the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit does not mean that we fail to accord the Holy Spirit equal honor and adoration with the Father and Son. Even St. Paul was careful to restrict the use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit within the ends for which they were bestowed and to insist upon their subordination to the visible power of that Church which Christ left in this world to take His place and in which the Holy Spirit dwells perpetually (cf. I Cor. cc. 12, 13, 14). The following beautiful litany in honor of the Holy Spirit

compiled by Father Gerald Fitzgerald, C.S.C., of Northeastern, Massachusetts, bears the imprimatur of Cardinal Spellman of New York.

## **A LITANY IN HONOR OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**(For private use only.)**

God, the Eternal Father, bless me,  
I adore Thee.

God, the Eternal Son, bless me, I  
adore Thee.

God, the Eternal Spirit, bless me, I  
adore Thee, and teach me to live for  
the glory of the Eternal Trinity alone.

Blessed Mother Mary, Virgin Spouse  
of the Holy Ghost, intercede for me  
that I may obtain through thy inter-  
cession the graces I desire through  
this litany which I offer to thy Divine  
Spouse by thy Immaculate Heart.

Holy Spirit, Who created me, I thank  
Thee.

Holy Spirit, Who redeemed me, I  
thank Thee.

Holy Spirit, Who sanctifies me, I  
thank Thee.

Holy Spirit of God,\*

Holy Spirit, without Whom the  
Father and the Son do nothing in  
Heaven or on earth,

Holy Spirit, Who in the beginning  
moved over the waters,

Holy Spirit, Who made Mary Im-  
maculate.

Holy Spirit, by Whom the Mystery  
of the Incarnation was accomplished.

Holy Spirit, Source of all holiness.

Holy Spirit, Who made me a child  
of God.

Holy Spirit, Who made me a soldier  
of God.

Holy Spirit Who wishes to make me  
a saint of God,

Holy Spirit, Source of my every good  
thought,

\* I adore Thee. (Repeat after each  
invocation.)

Holy Spirit, Inspirer of my every  
good word,

Holy Spirit, Spring of my every  
good action,

Holy Spirit, Who dwellest in the  
Bosom of the Father,

Holy Spirit, Who dwellest in the  
Bosom of Jesus,

Holy Spirit, Who dwellest in the  
Heart of Mary,

Holy Spirit, Who dwellest in the  
Church,

Holy Spirit, Who dwellest in the  
souls of the faithful,

Holy Spirit, Who dwellest in my  
unworthy heart,

Holy Spirit, Who speaketh to me  
through my Superiors,

Holy Spirit, Who has been so pa-  
tient with me,

Holy Spirit, Who has been so for-  
giving to me,

Holy Spirit, Who has inspired my  
contrition,

Holy Spirit. Who has inspired my  
resolutions,

Holy Spirit, Light of my mind,

Holy Spirit, Strength of my will,

Holy Spirit, Sweetness of my heart,

Holy Spirit, Divine Guardian of my  
virtue,

Holy Spirit, my Beginning,

Holy Spirit, my Last End,

Holy Spirit, without Whom I can do  
nothing,

Holy Spirit, without Whom I desire  
to do nothing,

Holy Spirit, Who bringest the Father  
and Jesus to me,

Holy Spirit, Who leadest me to Jesus.

Holy Spirit, my God and my all,

Holy Spirit, Who has set a seal on  
my soul,

Holy Spirit, Who protecteth me at  
this moment,

Holy Spirit, Who watchest over me  
whether I wake or sleep,

Holy Spirit, Who keepeth my soul  
in life,

Holy Spirit, Who will claim my soul  
in death,

Holy Spirit, my Eternal Love, I love  
Thee,

Holy Spirit, my Eternal Love, I  
thank Thee.

Holy Spirit, my Eternal Love, I adore  
Thee,

Lamb of God Who takest away the  
sins of the world, pour down Thy  
Spirit upon us, O Lord. (three times)

Pray for us, sweet Spouse of the  
Holy Spirit,

That we may be more worthy of  
His indwelling.

## LET US PRAY

O sweet Holy Spirit, Who dwellest  
as the Bond of Love in the Adorable  
Unity of the Holy Trinity, dwell ever-  
more in our souls; grant that we may  
never more grieve Thee, but be ever  
docile to Thy inspirations and in the  
unutterable condescension of Thy

Love; fulfill the desire of our Sweet Jesus that we should be one in Him as He is in His Father, Thou Who livest and reignest with Them, One Eternal Lord and God, World without end. Amen.

## **PRAYER FOR THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST**

Come, O Spirit of Wisdom! and instruct my heart, that I may always have my last end before me, and perform my good works with a pure intention. Let me value and use earthly goods only in as much as they are useful to my soul, and necessary for the wants of this life;—but heavenly things let me ever know and prize more and more. Make known to me the safest way, in which I can find, and finding, possess Thee, forever. Amen. Our Father, etc.

Come, O Spirit of Understanding! enlighten my soul, to know, and embrace with grateful love the mysteries of faith, that in Thy light I may come to the perfect knowledge of Thee, the Father, and the Son. Amen. Our Father, etc.

Come, O Spirit of Counsel! assist me in all the affairs of this unsettled life; incline my heart to good, turn it away from evil, assist me on all doubtful occasions; that I may reach the destined goal of everlasting happiness by the way of Thy commandments. Amen. Our Father, etc.

Come, O Spirit of Fortitude! strengthen my heart in every temptation, confusion, and affliction; give me virtue and courage in all malicious attacks of the enemy, that I may never be misled, shamefully to forsake Thee, O sovereign Good. Amen. Our Father, etc.



Come, O Spirit of Knowledge! guide my desire of learning, that I may not seek that science which may prove useless or dangerous. Let me know the vanity of all transitory goods. Give me diligence in learning and practicing the duties of my religion and state of life; teach me to fulfill them in a manner pleasing to Thee. Amen. Our Father, etc.

Come, O Spirit of Piety! fill my heart with true devotion, and holy love towards God, my Lord, that in all my prayers, I may continually seek, and by true charity find Him. Amen. Our Father, etc.

Come, O Spirit of Fear! penetrate my heart with a loving reverence towards God, that I may never do anything displeasing to His divine Majesty. Amen. Our Father, etc.

### **Let Us Pray**

Grant, O merciful Father, that Thy

Divine Spirit may enlighten, inflame  
and cleanse our hearts; that He may  
penetrate us with His heavenly dew,  
and make us fruitful in good works.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



